REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
2020-2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CITY OF NORWALK, IOWA
JANUARY 2020

Community Development Director: Luke Parris
City of Norwalk
705 North Avenue
Norwalk, Iowa 50211
(515) 556-2659
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The City of Norwalk invites you to submit a Proposal no later than Monday, February 10, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. Consultants should submit 7 hard copies and a digital version by email. The primary contact for the proposal is: Luke Parris (lparris@norwalk.iowa.gov), Community Development Director, 705 North Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211. All communication on the proposal and formal submission should be made to the primary contact.

Background/Purpose
The City of Norwalk’s current Comprehensive Plan began work in 2010, adopted in 2013, and received a major land use amendment in 2016 with various amendments aligning with proposed developments. The City has also adopted a standalone Parks Master Plan and a Greenways Master Plan. Recent plans for infrastructure expansion (sanitary sewer interceptor) provide the potential for the community to grow beyond the current planning boundary driving the need for a new Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to identify issues, opportunities, needs and organize public policy to address them in a manner that makes the best and most appropriate use of City resources as the community continues to grow. It will also describe a desired future for the community over the next 20 years and establish benchmarks to move toward that future. The Comprehensive Plan will be used by both elected officials and city staff to assist and provide a rational basis for land use decisions.

The City of Norwalk is a suburb in the Des Moines metropolitan area located southwest of the City of Des Moines in northern Warren County. The City’s current population estimate is 11,517 with anticipation of continued rapid growth. Norwalk’s population has increased 28% since 2010.

A copy of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and updates can be viewed at the City website: http://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/government/boards_and_commissions/planning___zoning

Comprehensive Plan Scope
The City is seeking a multidisciplinary consultant team (which may be a single firm or a consultant team consisting of individuals and/or firms with specialized expertise) to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan with the objective of providing the City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission, City staff, City residents, businesses, and the development community with a comprehensive, internally consistent and legally defensible tool to guide the City’s decision making and development over the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan will help maintain collaborative and respectful relationships within the community and with surrounding neighbors, and establish or confirm existing policies and priorities for coordinated development and/or redevelopment and necessary infrastructure expansion.
The consultant team selected will:

- Develop a new Comprehensive Plan, utilizing current plans where appropriate.
- Identify unnecessary, redundant and inconsistent information within the various City plans and recommend approaches (e.g. organization, formatting) to develop a consistent Comprehensive Plan.
- Design the Comprehensive Plan document, including development of the format and layout, as well as production of high-quality illustrations and graphics. Undertake the primary responsibility for editing and writing a cohesive Comprehensive Plan document. This will include editing existing text or drafting new, clear and concise text and policies that are supported by information in existing documents, new plans and studies, data analysis, public input, best practices, and/or successful application in other jurisdictions.
- Identify existing development regulations that need to be revised or updated to be consistent with the new Comprehensive Plan, and propose revisions, as necessary.
- Ensure the Comprehensive Plan aligns with the City Council’s 2028 Strategic Vision, http://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/government/mayor_and_city_council/city_council_priorities
- Present materials and amendments to the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council.
- Coordinate and support a public participation process for the Comprehensive Planning process. Prepare and produce high quality public outreach materials graphically and in writing describing facts, findings, analysis, and alternatives for public meetings, open houses, webpage, and hearings. Support City staff during public outreach opportunities.

The scope of work for the Plan will include, but is not limited to the following tasks:

- Outline a public participation plan, work plan and schedule that will allow the Plan to be reviewed and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council. The City desires an innovative public participation process that will engage the community in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:
  - Public meetings/workshops
  - Formal City meetings (Council and Planning & Zoning Commission)
  - Social media
  - Online and paper
  - Surveys
  - Community events

- Review and analyze local conditions
- Development of Comprehensive Plan content that analyzes data regarding the City and development trends. The Plan is anticipated to address the following topics:
  - Demographics
  - Public Participation
  - Commercial and Industrial Development
  - Job Creation
- Coordinate with other City plans, such as the Parks Master Plan, Greenways Master Plan, SubArea 1 Master Plan, and various existing development plans.

**Submission Criteria**
Qualified consultants will have experience in a variety of public outreach programs, facilitation of public meetings, compilation of information from varying sources (including GIS), and preparation of Comprehensive Plans.

**Submittal of Proposals and Budgets**
The consultant is solely responsible for ensuring that proposals are delivered on time via mail, courier, or in person. Proposals received after the due date and time will not be accepted and will be discarded. Faxed proposals will not be accepted. There is no set page limit, though due to review committee time commitment submittals should be in the range of thirty (30) one-sided pages. Please note that the City values efficiency and the quality of information is more valuable than quantity. The submittal should include:

1. Names of project team members that will primarily be working on the update, their related experience specific to comprehensive plan updates, and their expected roles in this project. List the anticipated percentage of time the project manager(s) and leads will have available for this project. Please identify the portions of the project anticipated to be performed by sub-consultants and their primary team member(s) working on that specific task.

2. Three references from jurisdictions with similar projects performed by the firm/team under a similar scope of work and budget.

3. Proposed approach and methodology to the scope of work, a work program outline with tasks and deliverables, time schedule and budget. Insights or suggestions from the consultant team on the strategy for development of the Comprehensive Plan and thoughts on creating a user-friendly planning document are welcome. The City is not set on a specific format and is interested in exploring potential alternative formats to make the Plan more accessible to the public.
   a. All tasks and deliverables proposed should be identified in a streamlined list or table along with general dates and firm/team member(s) responsible for the work.
   b. The proposal should include a work program with deliverables, corresponding at a minimum, to the scope of work outlined above, with a breakdown of estimated
hours and assigned personnel in each work task and phase, and costs associated with each task. A description of how the consultant team provides quality control to assure a high-quality document with a consistent voice, internal consistency, high level of service and successful project completion and management.

Understanding the City of Norwalk
The City of Norwalk is a growing suburb in the Des Moines metropolitan area that is poised for continuous growth within the next 20 years that will ideally grow the City from its past as a “bedroom” community to a more independent community. The City has a desire to preserve qualities that currently make Norwalk attractive. Therefore, the selected consulting firm must demonstrate a keen awareness of the City's past and profound understanding of the impacts of future growth. The Plan should help create a unique community through use of a diverse, flexible, and resilient development style. Demonstrating how a growing community can design neighborhoods and commercial development to be interactive while maintaining a “small-town” feel will be key.

Applicants should know that City Staff have already engaged over 100 property owners in a series of meetings aimed at informing property owners of the upcoming comprehensive planning process. These are property owners that own land beyond corporate limits. The City has also engaged Warren County Planning Staff to be involved in the process.

In preparing this proposal, the City would like each firm to specifically demonstrate the following as part of this RFP:

1. How will your plan engage the community in a unique way that links the past (and older generation) to the future (and next generation)?
2. How will your plan be innovative and be a working document that is easy to understand, unique to our community and is functional for years to come?
3. How will your public engagement process actually engage the community?
4. Since Public Participation and Future Land Use are a couple of the biggest components of this plan, what innovative tools do you intend to bring to assist us in this process?
5. How do you intend to manage this process and remain on budget?
6. In what ways is your firm the most suited to craft, what may be, the most important planning document for the next 20 years?

Budget and Timeline
The City feels that this Comprehensive Plan will serve as a crucial guide for the next stage of Norwalk’s growth which will necessitate a thorough and innovative public input process, as well as innovative planning techniques. Therefore, the cost allocated to the Comprehensive Plan project is $125,000. The funding for the project is currently budgeted across three fiscal years, starting in the current FY 2020, extending into FY 2021, and ending in FY 2022. The City anticipates an estimated 18 month planning process that would span these fiscal years. The proposed budget total should include all expenses and materials to deliver the work products. The City of Norwalk will not be liable for any costs incurred by the consultant in
preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, in conjunction with a presentation or other activities related to responding to this RFP. No costs chargeable for work under the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed contract with the City or specific written authorization from the City of Norwalk.

Timeline:
- RFP Release - January 13, 2020
- Deadline for submittal of RFP - February 7, 2020
- Review Committee - February 12, 2020
- Interviews with Consultants - February 17-20, 2020
- Review Committee - February 21, 2020
- Contract with Selected Consultant - February 28, 2020
- Recommendation of Contract to City Council - March 5, 2020
- Expected project completion - Fourth Quarter 2021

Questions on the RFP may be submitted to City staff by January 17, 2020. Staff will compile these questions and answer them in a document emailed to all respondents and posted to the City website.

Selection Process
The selection process will include review of proposals, preparation of a short list and final interviews. It is the City’s desire to select a consultant and get final City approval at the City Council meeting on March 6, 2020.

Proposals will be reviewed by the RFP Review Committee. The Committee will be made up of the Mayor, the City Council Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison, the Planning & Zoning Commission Chair, and three to four staff members. The Committee reserves the right to request additional information from consultants submitting proposals. The following criteria will be considered in the evaluation of the proposals:

1. Qualifications and previous related work of key personnel and firm, particularly with regard to working with municipalities of similar size, government structure, and issues.
2. Project Manager providing direct oversight and contact with City staff.
3. Understanding of project goals and general approach to the project. Although the City has identified the general nature of services required, the consultant has flexibility toward the approach to the methodology of the project and final product format. The City will pay particular attention to public input strategies as this will be a key point in obtaining consensus and buy-in to the Plan.
4. Proposed timeline to complete the work and demonstrated ability to meet proposed schedule and budgets on past projects.
5. Quality of sample materials and proposal package submitted.
After the RFP Review Committee completes reviews of submittals, the Committee will interview firms. Key personnel to be assigned to the project shall be present at interviews. The RFP Committee will make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will make the final selection.

**General Assumptions & Notes**

The scope of work contained in this document is predicated upon the following provisions, assumptions and conditions that should be part of any proposal and budget submitted by a consultant. The purpose of this list is to enumerate and describe mutual expectations and understandings required of all parties to this scope of work in order to complete this update on time and within budget.

1. The City may eliminate any task and associated contract hours/fees at any point throughout the contract period and will provide written notification of the task elimination to the consultant. Consultants will be paid for any task and associated contract hours/fees incurred prior to notification of cancellation.

2. All work products, including records, files, documents, plans, computer disks, magnetic media or material which may be produced or modified by the consultant or sub-consultant while performing this work shall belong to the City of Norwalk. Digital copies of any data collected by the consultant or sub-consultants shall be provided to the City of Norwalk.

3. The City expects final GIS data deliveries in ESRI ArcGIS Geodatabase format, matching all content and spatial parameters of the existing Warren County parcel data layer.

4. All consultant deliverables will be prepared in either MS Word or Google Docs format. All spreadsheets and graphs will be prepared in MS Excel or Google Sheets format. All maps and graphs shall be produced in color where appropriate. Digital copies of draft and final deliverables will be provided in both MS Word/Google Docs and PDF file formats as requested by City staff. Digital versions shall include all graphics, tables and appendices in suitable form for publishing on the City website.

5. The consultant will have primary responsibility for coordinating, reviewing and editing information obtained from their team members to ensure that the individual sections of the work submitted are prepared as part of one cohesive framework and/or document consistent in style and content.

6. The City will provide all available government documents, studies, site plans, GIS data layers and mapping, and other technical information pertaining to the study area based on the consultant’s data request. Any documents provided in hardcopy shall be returned to the City as appropriate upon completion of the contract.

7. The consultant will provide project updates and other information including graphics suitable for posting on the City’s website; the City is responsible for website updates of available project materials.

8. City staff will be responsible for distribution of meeting notices, public meeting room arrangements, and other logistics for public meetings.